

Suburbanization Theme Common Through End of Meetings in Decatur and Franklin Townships

The Indianapolis Insight Comprehensive Plan for Indianapolis-Marion County is nearing completion with the conclusion of the land use mapping processes in Decatur and Franklin Townships.

The Decatur Township land use mapping process began in January 2004 and continued over the next six months. Meetings were well attended with participation ranging from 40 to 120 persons.

The new plan's recommendations took into account the tremendous changes that have occurred in Decatur Township since the last plan was adopted. These changes include the development of Ameriplex, expansion of the area owned by the Airport Authority, a growing population and expansion of Southwestway Park.

The plan has recommended acquisition of land for new parks and additions to the Township's three existing parks. It has also laid out a system of linear parks along the White River and township's streams and creeks.

Seven Critical Areas were designated to add information to the plan about areas that have unique qualities needing special attention. These areas in-

cluded the village of West Newton and a residential area along Kentucky Avenue that is vulnerable to commercial encroachment. Critical areas were also designated for the Camby and Valley Mills neighborhoods and their interface with the Ameriplex Industrial Park.

Franklin Township has experienced some of the most dramatic changes in Marion County

in the past decade. High attendance levels for the land use update meetings revealed the public's interest in how the township should develop in coming decades. The high level of participa-

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Decatur Township residents of all ages participated in Land Use decision making.

Decatur, Franklin Continued...

tion was aided by publicity provided by the Franklin Township Civic League and other township organizations.

The need for a more balanced property tax base was heard throughout the plan preparation. Many residents identified the need for commercial and industrial property as a high priority. Efforts were made to find a variety of suitable retail, office and light industrial sites at or near interstate highway interchanges. This proved to be a challenge due to the lack of large vacant tracts within easy access of the three interstate highways. Most of the proposed industrial sites require signifi-

cant improvements of roads and utilities to realize their employment and tax base potentials.

The township's rapid growth has increased the need for parkland. More parkland was proposed throughout the township. The plan was being prepared concurrently with township level initiatives to secure specific park sites. It is essential to secure adequate park sites before they are consumed by private development.

The draft land use plan reflects continued development of the suburban character of the township while providing a greater range of housing densities than earlier plans. The plan recommends some sites where sparsely

developed land should become more intensively developed to take advantage of their proximity to major transportation corridors.

While much of the land use plan dealt with the conversion of farmland to suburban land use, three sites were recommended for Village Mixed Use. The villages of Acton and Wana-maker possess a character that clearly reveals their 19th century origins. Each village has unique qualities to be preserved and enhanced. A third area, Southeastern Avenue and Five Points Road, has fewer historic elements but offers the potential to serve as central point for existing and developing neighborhoods. With US 421 now routed on I-74, the Southeastern Avenue corridor can be more compatible with its surrounding neighborhoods.

Critical Areas in Franklin Township are quite diverse. Several areas concern establishing the appropriate edge between growing commercial corridors and established residential areas. Two critical areas involve establishing retail and office land uses in areas that are now largely agricultural lands. Commonly, residential development precedes retail and office development. It is important to preserve sites where retail and office development can be built when demand is evident. Another critical area concerns a large light industrial site near the I-74 / Pleasant View interchange. Development in this area requires a high level of coordination between neighboring governmental jurisdictions for appropriate land use, access and other infrastructure improvements.

Perry Township continued...

third of Perry Township will be divided into discussion areas to enable a focus on characteristics unique to each area. Afterwards, critical areas within each discussion area will be identified for further scrutiny, based on factors such as existing land use conflicts, envi-

ronmental constraints, or recent or anticipated land use events. The end of meetings in Perry Township will signal the end of the Land Use Mapping phase's neighborhood meetings, as all other townships will have preceded western Perry's meetings. For information on the process for the adoption of the Land Use Mapping phase of the

Comprehensive Plan by the Metropolitan Development Commission, see the article on Page three of this newsletter.

Long-anticipated Adoption Process Draws Near

As the land use mapping phase of the new Indianapolis Insight Comprehensive Plan draws to a close, it is time to think about the Plan's adoption by the Metropolitan Development Commission (MDC).

Adoption by the MDC will make the maps part of the official "plan of record," for use by anyone with an interest in the development of the city and county or the development of an individual parcel of land. In particular, the MDC will use the newly adopted maps when making zoning decisions as provided in state law (I.C. 36-7-4-603).

The land use maps have been developed in eight township planning areas. The township land use maps will now be put together into one overall Marion County plan.

Although Indianapolis Insight is a countywide plan, it is a lot to ask of the MDC members to consider and make a decision on the whole county

at one hearing. Staff is recommending that the plan be adopted in four parts over a four-month period, two township planning areas at a time. At this time staff is proposing to have the first two township planning areas come to a MDC vote in September, so that adoption of all the township planning areas can be completed by the end of the year.

Before going to the MDC for adoption the staff will research rezonings, variances and other planning efforts that have occurred since the end of each township's planning meetings. Staff will look to see how these subsequent cases affect the plan and if the plan's recommendations should be changed to accommodate them. If the changes are numerous, large or complex, or if staff knows of other issues that have arisen, a public review meeting will be held to discuss changes and ask for comment.

The tentative schedule for

adoption is:

September: Wayne and Lawrence township planning areas

October: Pike and Washington township planning areas

November: Warren and Decatur township planning areas

December: Franklin and Perry township planning areas

The Wayne, Warren and Perry township planning areas include portions of Center Township that do not have an existing, viable neighborhood or corridor plan.

A public review meeting has been scheduled for the Wayne Township Planning Area for July 12 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wayne Township Government Center (5401 W. Washington Street). The primary purpose of this meeting will be to discuss changes to the plan based on events that have occurred since the time of last planning meeting; October 2002.

Implementation Takes a New Direction

When last we left the Indianapolis Insight Implementation Committee, they were setting their sights on prioritizing implementation recommendations grouped under the "Supporting Issues" category in the Community Values component of the Indianapolis Comprehensive Plan. The Committee had previously finalized its top-priority recommendations for three other categories: meeting land use goals, initiating ordinance and procedure changes, and improving development methods. The Supporting Issues category includes 113 desired improvements relating to the mission of the Department of Metropolitan Development that do not involve considerations of the use of land or how that land is developed. The five recommendations that received the highest ranking were:

- Develop a reliable funding mecha-

nism for the acquisition of land for parks and greenways.

- Establish a dependable funding mechanism for infrastructure improvements.
- Continue current city policies to manage stormwater so that development will not adversely affect the water quality of downstream properties.
- Quickly implement a comprehensive long-term control plan for combined sewer overflows (CSO).
- Strive for all properties to meet the rules, regulations, and codes of the Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County and the Department of Metropolitan Development to ensure the well being of all citizens.

With the completion of the Supporting Issues prioritization, the

Committee was poised to facilitate implementation of selected recommendations. To that end, individual recommendations under all four categories (Land Use, Ordinance and Procedural Changes, Development Methods, and Supporting Issues) were generally grouped by subject matter, such as Public Transportation, Community Involvement, Public Health/Safety and Redevelopment/Preservation. The subject having the highest number of high-priority recommendations was Community Involvement in Development. The Committee is currently taking action to implement or coordinate the following recommendations regarding Community Involvement:

- Continue to encourage developers to notify and meet with neighbor-

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Planners on the Path to a New Pedestrian Plan

The increasing public demand for alternatives to vehicular travel shaped a number of goals and recommendations of the Indianapolis Insight Community Values Component. The plan includes recommendations for development methods, land use mapping standards, ordinances and supporting issues that give greater attention to pedestrian connectivity throughout the city and region.

A related plan of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization deals quite specifically with improving the city's pedestrian infrastructure. Building on a prototype study for the Glendale Neighborhood, the draft Indianapolis Regional Pedestrian Plan began in Center Township. During 2004, this multiple-year planning effort will focus on the eight outlying townships that make up Marion County and the City of Indianapolis.

The overall goal of the regional pedestrian plan is a 20-year implementation program for walkability throughout the nine county Indianapolis planning region. Within the plan are the following objectives:

- Reduce dependency on private automobile for personal transportation by providing viable and attractive alternatives.
- Provide pedestrian accessibility to schools, parks, shopping, places of employment, and to public transit routes and stops.
- Incorporate principles of environmental justice to the prioritizing and distribution of facilities.
- Incorporate ADA/universal accessibility principles in pedestrian system design guidelines.
- Leverage interagency resources and innovative funding for cost effective implementation of a com-

prehensive pedestrian system.

Key concepts include:

- Transit oriented development
- Pedestrian corridors and districts
- Pedestrian/Transit system integration
- Walk-to-school buffer/collector zones
- Environmental design guidelines and development regulations for walkability
- Thoroughfare system classifications incorporating pedestrian and bicycle categories
- Permitting system based on Best Practices

The Indianapolis Insight Community Values Component recommends coordination with the Indianapolis Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Planning Initiatives Focus on Neighborhoods and Transportation

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan update, the City of Indianapolis, Division of Planning is engaged in several other planning activities.

The Subarea section provides planning and technical assistance for portions of Marion County smaller than townships. Currently, the Subarea section is working on the following plans:

The Irvington Neighborhood Plan is currently in the committee phase. When completed, the plan will help this eastside neighborhood to create a village atmosphere and attract more business and services that are needed in the area.

The United Northwest Area Neighborhood Plan is in the community building and data gathering phase. When completed, this plan will help the neighborhood guide development activities for new housing and commercial activity along Martin Luther King Blvd.

The Meridian Street Preservation Area Plan has been completed in draft form. This plan will help solidify, maintain and stabilize the Meridian Street corridor north of 40th Street, and guide appropriate land use and zoning decision making. It is anticipated that the plan will be presented to the Meridian Street Preservation Commission on July 20 for approval.

For questions on any of these Sub Area plans, please contact Bob Wilch at 327-5155.

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is made up of staff from the Transportation Section of the Division of Planning, has the responsibility of conducting a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Central Indiana urbanized area. Currently the MPO is working on an update to the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Plan. The update will include new cen-

sus information from the 2000 Census and respond to emerging transportation issues. In addition the plan is required by the Federal Government to always have a 20-year timeline.

The plan update will take part in a three-phase study.

The first phase will look at the existing transportation situation. A public meeting for this phase will be held on July 22, at Glendale Mall from 3-7:00 PM.

The second phase will look at alternative solutions to existing modes of transportation. A multi-modal plan for alternative types of transit will be included in the update.

The third phase will be the completion and presentation of the final recommendations for this update.

If you have any questions on the plan update, please contact Phil Roth at 327-5155.

Order Form

Use this form to order the Indianapolis Insight Plan Community Values Component, the Indianapolis Insight Land Use Mapping Handbook or the Indianapolis Development Assets (IDA) book.

The Community Values Component guides development of the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan update and also includes planning principles, value statements and recommendations for new and revised policies, procedures, programs, and ordinances. The first copy is available free of charge. Additional copies are \$5.00. The Community Values Component will be available in final printed form early in June.

The Land Use Mapping Handbook is a short, user-friendly guide to the land use mapping process. The Land Use Mapping Handbook is available free of charge and is available now.

The Indianapolis Development Assets book is an atlas of useful information on the population, economy, natural resources transportation, infrastructure government, housing and quality of life in Marion County. The IDA book is available for \$15.00.

To receive copies of these documents, please return this form to:

Division of Planning, Comprehensive Planning Section

1821 City-County Building

200 East Washington Street

Indianapolis, IN 46204

Or fax it to the Comprehensive Planning Section at 327-5103.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

_____ Indianapolis Insight Plan, Community Values Component

_____ Indianapolis Insight Land Use Mapping Handbook

_____ Indianapolis Development Assets Book

Implementation continued...

- hood associations as early in the development process as possible.
- Convene the leaders of neighborhood organizations and districts representing older suburban areas to coordinate revitalization and economic development efforts, including the identification of sources of funding for redevelopment and incentive procurement.
- Support small-scale community projects and events, including neighborhood celebrations, clean-ups, home fix-ups, beautification,

community gardens, and neighborhood newsletters to build community.

- Develop and publish citizens' guide to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning and development principles to educate citizens on how they can become involved in zoning and development decisions.

Progress is expected on the Community Involvement recommendations before the Committee turns its attention to Parks/Green Space, the subject having the second highest number of high-priority recommendations. The Committee meets monthly to monitor

progress and propose new work efforts, and invites speakers in as necessary to provide expertise in various aspects of metropolitan development.

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The View: Newsletter for the Update
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Comprehensive Plan
City of Indianapolis
Comprehensive Planning
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Perry Township Planning Resumes With Western Portion

Discussion of land use in connection with ongoing Indianapolis Comprehensive Plan activities is set to resume in the western third of Perry Township. Meetings have been scheduled for the location and dates listed below:

**Rosa Parks-Edison
Elementary School (7525
Wellingshire Boulevard)
June 28, 2004, 7:00 p.m.
July 19, 2004, 7:00 p.m.
August 9, 2004, 7:00 p.m.**

The meetings represent the end of a year-long wait for discussion in the western portion of Perry Township. In January of 2003, Indianapolis' Comprehensive Planning staff began neighborhood meetings in the township. The

meetings were originally intended to cover the entire township plus the City of Beech Grove and a small portion of southeastern Center Township. As Perry's land use planning process was starting, the State of Indiana announced that its favored route for the extension of I-69 would run through the western portion of Perry Township. In response to citizen concerns, city staff decided to postpone planning in the vicinity of the proposed route until mid-2004. It was expected that, by that time, more specific information would be available about the proposed route and its impact on the existing road system.

During the newly-scheduled meetings, proposed land use patterns to guide Perry Township's future will be considered following the principles and mapping standards contained in the

recently adopted Community Values Component of the Comprehensive Plan. New information contained in the final environmental impact statement for the proposed I-69, released in December of 2003 by the U.S. Department of Transportation, adds critical information needed for a realistic discussion of land use in western portion of the township. The environmental impact statement is helpful in identifying sensitive features such as sinkholes, historic structures, abandoned mines, and threatened and endangered species habitat along the alignment.

The meeting process will follow the process utilized for the other seven township planning areas in Marion County. The western one-

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